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Cease-Fire Developments

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23 May 1973 No. 2020/73

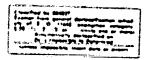
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Cease-Fire Developments

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25X1	Comments and queries on the contents of this publication are welcome. They may be directed to of the Office of Current Intelligence,
	CONTENTS
	23 May 1973
	CAMBODIA
	The Military Situation
	VIETNAM
	Exiles Wooed by Both Sides
	LAOS
	The many Marchan and the telephone Millia tempore

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The Military Situation

Communist military activity east of Phnom Penh in the vicinity of the government's Mekong River base at Neak Luong remained at a high level on 23 May. A government battalion operating on Route 1 a few miles west of Neak Luong has been isolated by Communist forces, and Neak Luong itself was subjected to another heavy shelling. At last report, no positions near the base had been lost.

Government forces met no resistance in clearing
Route 3 southward to the village of Tram Khnar, or
in reopening a section of Route 4 northeast of Kompong
Som that had been closed by Communist attacks on 21
May. Truck convoys between Kompong Som and Phnom
Penh are to be resumed in the next few days.

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23 May 1973

VIETNAM

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Exilen Woord by Both Siden

Both Saigon and Hanoi are seeking to improve	
their relations with Vietnamese exiles.	25X1
last wook	,
that Thieu now recognizes that many of the exiles	
are opposed to his government, but are not neces-	
sarily pro-Communist. As part of a more concilia-	
tory policy, Thieu has ordered a review of the cases	
of those expatriates living in France, the US and	
Japan, who have been "blacklisted" and prohibited	
from returning to South Vietnam. Thieu apparently	
believes that removing restrictions on some indi-	
viduals can help to improve Saigon's standing among	
exiles in general.	
Members of the North Vietnamese diplomatic mis-	
sion in Paris are also under orders not to antagonize	
the exiles and to treat all Vietnamese in Paris in a	
conciliatory and courteous manner. Hanoi's charge in	
Paris recently that discourteous con-	
duct had given Vietnamese exiles a poor impression of	
North Vietnam. The charge claimed that the mission	
must be prepared for the coming of a peace settlement	
and that his staff might "even" be compelled to treat	25X1
officials of the Saigon government amicably, because	20/(1
some of them might be in a new government formed after	
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23 May 1973

LAOS

Phong Meeta with the Military

Government negotiator Pheng Phongsavan has been talking with senior Lao Army officers during the past two weeks about possible military concessions to the Communists. The officers rejected any further concessions. They particularly objected to the Pathet Lao proposal for a formal demarcation of areas of control, which would give the Communists some territory now under government control. Pheng almost certainly anticipated these negative reactions, but nevertheless believed that it is politically prudent to at least go through the motions of consulting with the generals.

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23 May 1973

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